

Scaffolding Project-Based Instruction: Supporting Student Success

Project-Based Instruction offers opportunities to engage in real-world learning and develop practical language skills. Without appropriate support and structure, however, it can be challenging to implement projects in the EFL classroom, and many educators give up on project-based instruction because of initial challenges.

In this webinar, we will:

- examine instructional scaffolding as a remedy for many of the potential challenges that arise during project-based instruction
- explore three scaffolding techniques: breaking tasks down into smaller steps; offering templates and models; and using rubrics to explain expected performance



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Tabitha has taught French, Spanish, and English to students ranging from pre-schoolers to adults, and has conducted professional development for language teachers around the world. She chaired the Standards Professional Council for TESOL International and is a frequent presenter at regional and international TESOL conferences.



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Session Plan

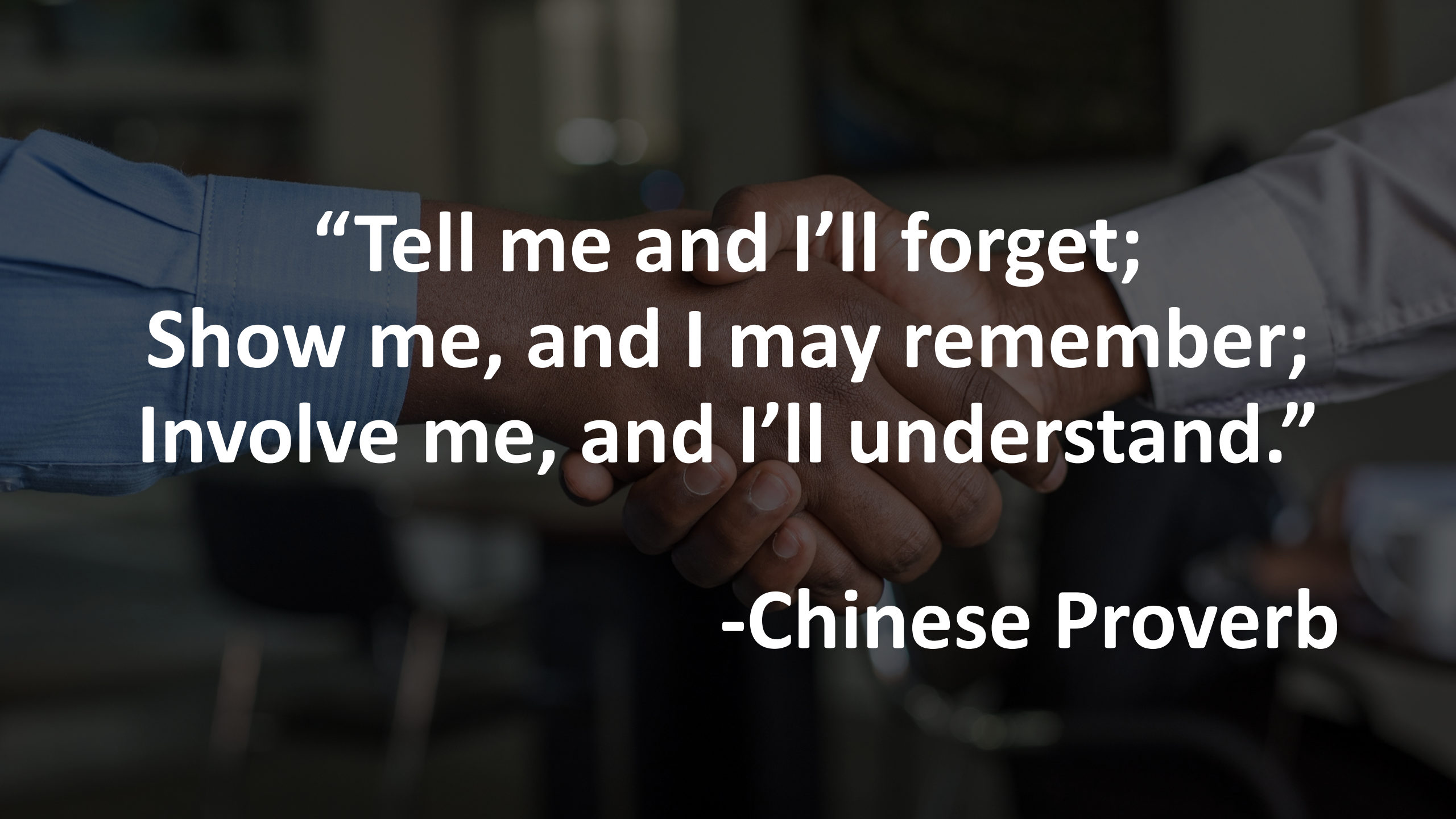


Project-Based Instruction Overview

Scaffolding Overview

3 Key Scaffolding Techniques to Support PBI

Action Planning

A close-up photograph of two hands shaking in a firm grip. The hand on the left is wearing a blue shirt sleeve, and the hand on the right is wearing a light-colored shirt sleeve. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be an office or meeting environment. The text is overlaid on the image in a white, bold, sans-serif font.

**“Tell me and I’ll forget;
Show me, and I may remember;
Involve me, and I’ll understand.”**

-Chinese Proverb

Let's hear your examples!

What projects have you used in English class?

What projects have you completed as a student?



Teaching using projects

- Using projects to practice language.
- Something “extra” after instruction.



Project-Based Instruction

- Using projects to teach language.
- A new way to approach instruction.



Strong Project-Based Instruction involves...



Hands-on Learning



Collaboration



Public Product



Authenticity

Example Beginner-level Project: Fashion Show



Language learned:

- Colors
- Fabric vocabulary
- Adjectives
- Descriptive sentences
- Writing skills (to prepare descriptions)
- Speaking skills (to read descriptions)

Example Intermediate-level Project: Mock Job Application



Language learned:

- Format of cover letter
- Format of CV
- How to discuss previous experiences in writing & in an interview
- Past tense verbs
- Workplace vocabulary

Example Advanced-level Project: Tourism Promotion



Language learned:

- Persuasive language
- Writing skills
- Speaking skills
- Intercultural competence

Your experiences with PBI...

If you have taught using PBI before, share **1-3 words** in the chat that **summarize your experience**.



Project-Based Instruction Timeline

Project Launch

- Introduce project
- Motivate students
- Spark curiosity

Research, Planning & Preparation

- Traditional lessons
- Guided work
- Semi-independent work
- Introduce resources

Project Preparation

- Provide materials
- Offer guidance
- Give feedback

Presentation

- Share project with a public audience

Example Timeline:

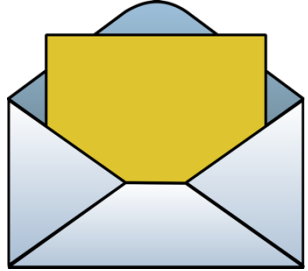
"Tastes of our Town" (Local Food Cookbook)

Project
Launch

Research,
Planning &
Preparation

Project
Preparation

Presentation



What are some possible challenges?



Example responses:

1: Students don't understand what to do.

3: Students are distracted or off-task.

Session Plan Check-in

Project-Based Instruction Overview



Scaffolding Overview

3 Key Scaffolding Techniques to Support PBI

Action Planning

Scaffolding

In construction:



In education:



Instructional Scaffolds

- Visual aids
- Gestures
- Peer support
- Graphic Organizers
- Sentence starters
- Models & demonstrations
- Reviewing previous lessons
- Activating prior knowledge
- Explaining in different ways
- Breaking tasks into smaller steps
- Pre-teach vocabulary
- Give students time to think
- Guided practice
- Checking for understanding
- Working with partners & small groups

Audience Question: What Instructional Scaffolds do you use?

Session Plan Check-in

Project-Based Instruction Overview

Scaffolding Overview

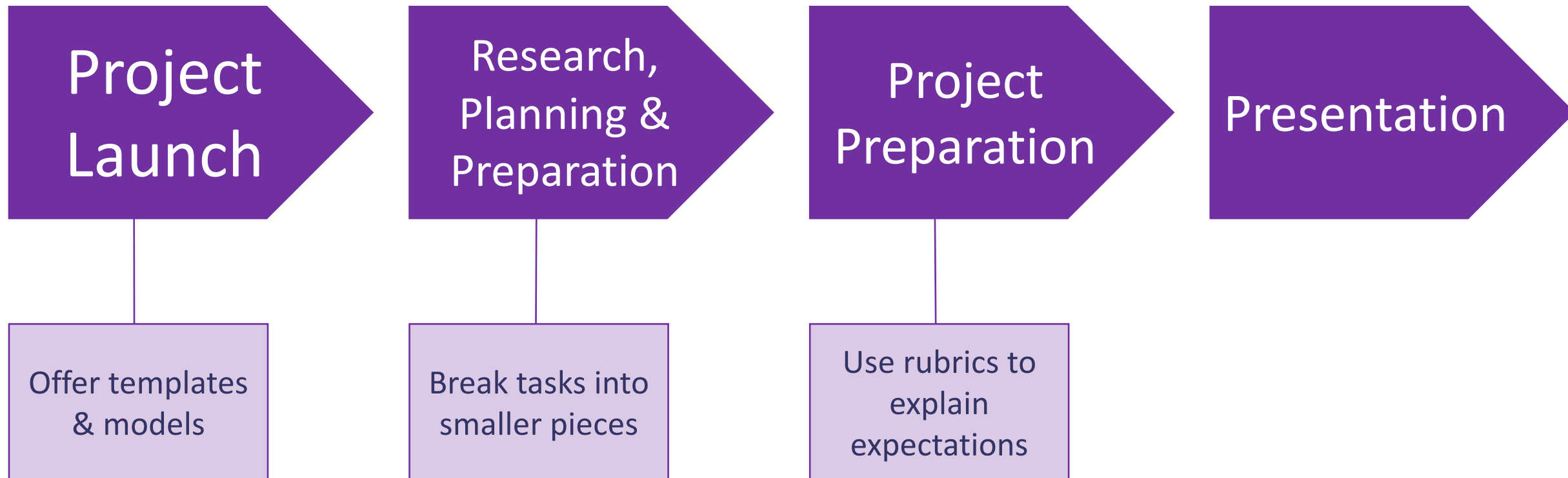


3 Key Scaffolding Techniques to Support PBI

Action Planning

Key Scaffolding Techniques:

Project-Based Instruction Timeline



Key Scaffolding Technique #1: Offer models and templates during *Project Launch*

RICE

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups water
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 1 cup rice

DIRECTIONS

Put water, salt, and oil in a pot.
Bring water to a boil.
Stir in rice.
Let the water return to a light simmer.
Cover the pot and turn heat to low.
Cook until all water is absorbed.
Turn off heat and let sit for 2 minutes.



Models:

- Complete, high-quality examples
- Could be an authentic, professionally-produced example
- Could be an example from students who have done the project in the past

Key Scaffolding Technique #1: Offer models and templates during *Project Launch*

[NAME OF FOOD]

INGREDIENTS

- ...
- ...
- ...
- ...

DIRECTIONS

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

Add photo here

Templates:

- Partially complete products that give a structure to follow

Additional models and templates for “*Tastes of our Town*”



Cookbooks

Recipe Interview Template
Your name:
Interviewee name:
Food:
Ingredients:
Steps to make the food:
Additional information about this food:

Interview
Template



Photos and videos of
food festival

Let's hear your examples!

How have you used models or templates in your classes?



Key Scaffolding Technique #2: Break tasks into smaller pieces during *Research, Planning & Preparation*



Plan Daily Tasks

- Think through required tasks & sub-tasks to complete the project
- Guide students through those tasks, step-by-step
- Provide support through the process
- Continue to prepare daily lesson plans

Key Scaffolding Technique #2: Break tasks into smaller pieces during *Research, Planning & Preparation*



Deliver Mini-Lessons

- Plan some more traditional, teacher-centered activities to teach essential content
- Examples:
 - Measurement vocabulary (cup, teaspoon, grams)
 - Imperative form

Key Scaffolding Technique #2: Break tasks into smaller pieces during *Research, Planning & Preparation*



Offer Feedback

- Conduct formative assessments (assessments during the learning process)
- Give feedback early on so students can improve
- Give extra support if students are struggling.

Let's plan together!

What smaller tasks will students complete as they do the *Tastes of our Town* project?

Examples:

- Read recipes
- Review cookbooks
- Prepare interview
- Learn measurement vocabulary
- Write ingredient list following template
- ...?



Smaller Tasks for “*Tastes of our Town*” Cookbook

1. Read recipes
2. Review cookbooks
3. Prepare interview
4. Conduct interview
5. Organize interview notes
6. Learn measurement vocabulary
7. Write ingredient list following template
8. Learn imperative structure for directions
9. Write directions
10. Review peers’ recipes
11. Revise recipes
12. Type recipes using regular format
13. Prepare for subcommittee work by:
 - a. Discussing norms for group work
 - b. Assigning students roles within groups
14. Divide into subcommittees for:
 - a. Organization & table of contents
 - b. Introduction
 - c. Cover art
15. Compile cookbook as class

Audience Check-in: Rubrics

How familiar are you with rubrics?

1. Not familiar at all: Rubrics are brand new for me.
2. A little familiar: I know what a rubric is.
3. Pretty familiar: I sometimes use rubrics.
4. Extremely familiar: I use rubrics all the time!



Key Scaffolding Technique #3: Use rubrics to explain expectations during *Project Preparation*

Rubric Template →

- Identify criteria
- Define expectations at each level of performance

Recipe Rubric			
Criteria	Meets Expectations	Approaches Expectations	Needs Improvement

Key Scaffolding Technique #3: Use rubrics to explain expectations during *Project Preparation*

Grid Style Rubric

- Specifies performance at various levels of student achievement
- Simplifies grading
- Makes your expectations clear to students if provided before project submission

Recipe Rubric			
Criteria	Meets Expectations	Approaches Expectations	Needs Improvement
Ingredient list	Ingredient list includes all ingredients in order of use, with appropriate measurements.	Ingredient list omits 1-2 ingredients, OR 1-2 ingredients are listed out of order, OR 1-2 measurements are not accurate.	Ingredient list omits more than 2 ingredients, OR more than 3 ingredients are listed out of order, or more than 2 ingredients are not accurate.
Directions list	Directions list uses imperative form and is clear and easy to follow. Transitions are included to help the user move from one step to the next.	Directions list uses imperative form but is unclear and difficult to follow in 1 or 2 locations, perhaps because transitions are not used effectively.	Directions list does not use imperative form or is unclear and difficult to follow throughout. Transitions do not help the user move from one step to the next.
Organization	Recipe includes title, photo, ingredients, and directions in the format discussed in class.	Recipe omits one required element or is not in the format discussed in class.	Recipe omits more than one required element.
Grammar & Spelling	Writer makes no grammar or spelling errors that could cause the user to follow the recipe incorrectly.	Writer makes 1-2 grammar or spelling errors that could cause the user to follow the recipe incorrectly.	Writer makes more than 2 grammar or spelling errors that could cause the user to follow the recipe incorrectly.

Additional Rubric for “*Tastes of our Town*”

Checklist Style Rubric

- Helps teacher keep track of project elements during a presentation or event
- Informs students of requirements & expectations if provided before project submission

Food Festival: Required elements

Poster includes:

- ☐ Large, visible title
- ☐ Photo of dish
- ☐ Paragraph explaining history & cultural significance
- ☐ List of ingredients
- ☐ Step-by-step instructions

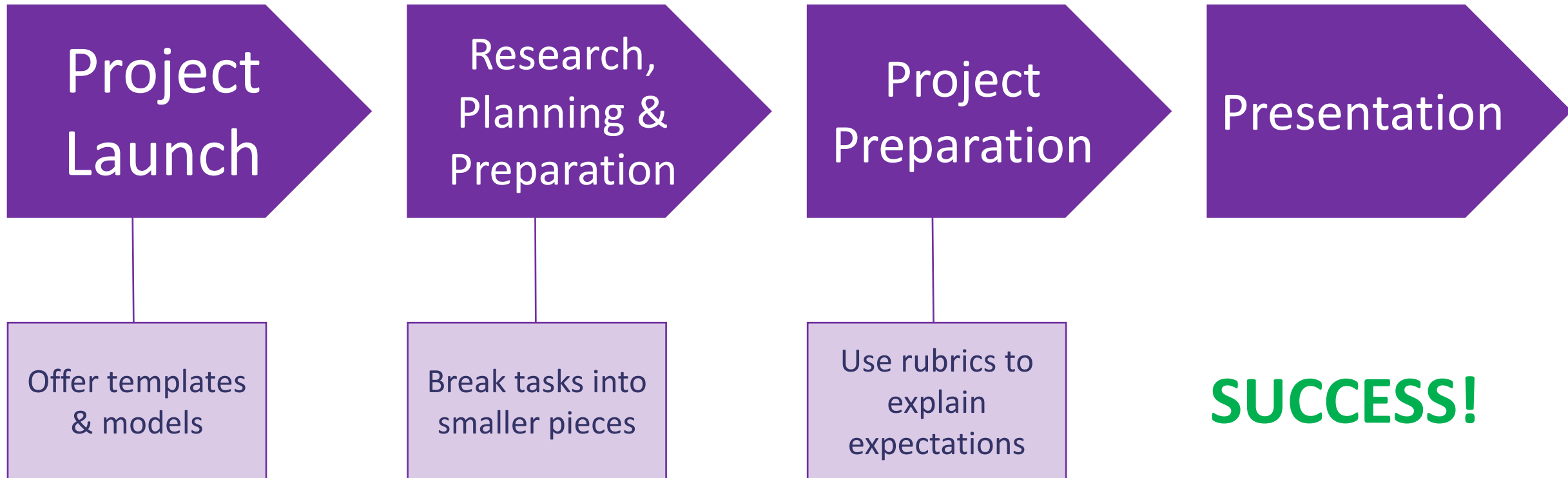
Food:

- ☐ Prepared by you
- ☐ Follows your recipe
- ☐ Small portions for 25 people
- ☐ Appealing presentation
- ☐ Pleasant taste

Presentation:

- ☐ Issue oral invitations to try dish
- ☐ Briefly description of dish
- ☐ Answer questions about dish

Key Scaffolding Techniques: Project-Based Instruction Timeline



Session Plan Check-in

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Action Planning



Action Planning!

- Choose one strategy from today's presentation
- Write a 1-sentence action plan.
 - Example 1: I will design and use a rubric for the debate assignment next week.
 - Example 2: I will start to plan a Mock Job Interview project.
- Share in the chat!

References

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Thank you!

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Reflection Questions

1. Do you use Project-based Instruction? Do your—or, if PBI is new to you, could your— projects involve: hands-on learning, collaboration, authenticity, and a publicly shared product?
2. What types of scaffolding do you use most often? Which other scaffolding options seen in the webinar might you add to your “teaching toolkit”?
3. Have you tried breaking projects down into smaller parts or sharing rubrics to set project expectations? How, or how might you do so in the future?



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